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Annual Staff Conference

1 June 2007

The International Experience: Culture, Sensitivity and Expectations

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Objectives:

- Increase awareness of our own and other people's cultures
- Develop sensitivity to the ways in which cultural differences may affect your interactions with international students
- Identify key stages of cultural adjustment and possible effects of cultural shock
- Identify ways of how student expectations can be met.

UK's Position & Competition

Competition and International student numbers:

- USA –Global leader - 564,766 students
- UK 356,080 students (121,730 EU, 234350 OS)
- Australia 197,687 students
- New Zealand and Europe

Source: HESA, British Council, UKCOSA

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Strategic and Economic importance

- Education export contributes more than £10,2bn to the UK Economy
- One single full fee paying international 3 year degree student at Chester brings in:
 - around £22,000 in tuition fees
 - around £8,000 - £11,000 in accommodation fees if live on-campus
- New students at Chester generate approx. £400,000 revenue annually in tuition fees only

International Students at Chester

The number of International students at Chester –
370 students (including OS, EU, Exchange, Research)

Numbers in the table below is based on OS statistics only

Year	Enquiries	Applications	New Enrolments OS only
2007 (as of May)	1,998	853	-
2006	2,327	743	52
2005	1,748	815	48
2004	942	658	52

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Top Ten Nationalities

International students come to Chester from 58 countries.

Top 10 countries where students come from:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. <i>Republic of Ireland</i> | 6. <i>China</i> |
| 2. <i>India</i> | 7. <i>France</i> |
| 3. <i>USA</i> | 8. <i>Finland</i> |
| 4. <i>Spain</i> | 9. <i>Japan</i> |
| 5. <i>Germany</i> | 10. <i>Poland</i> |

Student Expectations

- Internationally recognised qualification
- High quality teaching
- High standard facilities, accommodation
- Safe, Friendly environment
- Welfare provision, meeting/greeting
- Opportunity to improve English and make friends
- Good value for money
- Better Job prospects (UK or home country)

Student Video

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Student Concerns

- Two main concerns before arrival: accommodation and finance
- English Language support provision
- Difficulties in mixing with British Students
- Concerns about homesickness and isolation
- Difficulties in understanding methods and approaches to teaching and study skills

Cultural Variations

- Space
- Time
- Verbal behaviour
- Non-verbal behaviour
- Context (high/Low)



Factors affecting cross-cultural communication

- Language and verbal communication
- Non-verbal communication
- Perceptions and stereotypes
- Tendency to evaluate
- Emotional responses
- Organisational constraints

Culture

What is Culture?

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Theorisation of national cultural differences

- “A far off and distant place about which we know little” ?
- 1980s:
 - increasing globalisation of industry
 - mass migration: cultural v. geographical distance
 - increasing international travel (Europeans)
- McDonaldization thesis – cultural convergence ...
at a superficial level ... cultural distinctiveness even divergence
- Attempts to theorise cultural differences – a reaction against the “*banal, simplistic and misleading*” treatment of culture (Needle, 2000) and move beyond stereotyping
- Culture – a contested concept ... meanings, beliefs, values
 - “*The **collective** programming of the mind*” (Hofstede, 2001)

Hofstede's work

- Cross-cultural study ... (1980 - *Culture's Consequences*)
 - 116,00 employees of IBM
 - 40 countries
- Factor analysis of data –
 - 5 dimensions of culture
 - Largely mutually exclusive dimensions
- Findings affirmed by on-going *Global Leadership and Organisational Behaviour Effectiveness (GLOBE)* research programme – longitudinal study in 825 organisations in 62 countries
- Recognition of cross-cutting cultures
 - gender, class, occupational, religious ... significant in some nations e.g. "Britain"

Hofstede's work

- First –
 - Understanding the cultural distinctiveness of one's own culture
- Then –
 - Consider the position of the other

Understanding national cultural differences

National cultures have different orientations to learning and change ... Hofstede's dimensions:

Individualism	<hr/>	Collectivism
High Power Distance	<hr/>	Low Power Distance
High Uncertainty avoidance	<hr/> <hr/>	Low Uncertainty avoidance
Masculinity	<hr/>	Femininity
Short-term orientation		Long-term orientation

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Dimensions

– Individualism – Collectivism

- Tendency to take care of oneself and one's family *versus* the tendency to work together for the collective good

– High PD – Low PD

- The extent to which an unequal distribution of power is accepted by members of a society
High PD – unwillingness to think / act independently

– High UA – Low UA

- The extent to which members of a society feel threatened by ambiguous situations and have created beliefs and institutions which try to avoid these

– Masculinity – Femininity

- The extent to which highly assertive masculine values predominate *versus* showing sensitivity and concern for others' welfare and the quality of life ... doing *versus* being orientation

National cultural differences

Trompenaars, F. (1993) *Riding the Waves of Culture* ... focused on values *cf.* behaviours:

- Identified seven dimensions of national cultural difference:
 - universalism v. particularism
 - collectivism v. individualism
 - affective v. neutral
 - specific v. diffuse relationships
 - achieving v. ascribing status
 - time as sequence v. time as synchronous
 - inner directed v. outer directed
- Hofstede, Trompenaars *et al.* are not without their critics ... however -
- Utility in these models for considering:
 - what might work / might not work where and why
 - affordances for and constraints on organisational change

Group Discussion

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For Further Information

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Websites

- **UKCOSA** (The Council for International Education)
www.ukcosa.org.uk
- **British Council:**
www.britishcouncil.org/eumd
- **The intercultural Communication institute:** <http://www.intercultural.org/>
- **The intercultural Press:** <http://www.interculturalpress.com>
- **The Society for intercultural Education, Training and Research (SIETAR):**
<http://www.sietar.org>

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